

Holidays In Term Time

A Guide For Parents/Carers

Holidays

The majority of us look forward to holidays. Whether it's time off work, simply a break from the normal activities of the day, or the trip of a lifetime, we all need time to recharge our batteries and spend some quality time together as a family.

There are lots of reasons why we choose to holiday at certain times of the year –



- We get the weather we want
- The price is cheaper
- Flights are only available on certain days
- We want to go with other people and it's the only time they can go
- It's easier to get time off work

Although we appreciate the benefits of all the above reasons, if you are wanting to take your child out of school to go on holiday please think again.

Your child's progress and continuity of learning must come first. We strive for full attendance at Minsthorpe Community College and we want the same for your child. Think about the message you are giving to your child that it's acceptable to miss school to go on holiday.

The Facts

Taking 10 days' absence for family holidays in an academic year means that the maximum attendance your child can achieve is 94.7%.

Minsthorpe Community College expects that all students will achieve a minimum of 95% attendance.

If your child is also absent for 10 days' unavoidable illness (a total of 20 days' absence), their overall attendance would drop to just 89.5%. A student with 90% or below is identified as a 'Persistent Absentee'.

Nationally, in 2006, 90% of children with less than 7.5 days absence achieved 5 GCSE's A-C grades, whereas only 50% of children with 12.5 – 19.5 days absence achieved this level. This dropped to 31% of children with over 20 days absence.

Two weeks absence means your child loses 60 hours of learning which they can never get back. Your child could miss a whole topic which will not be revisited.

A two week holiday during term time every year of your child's life equals almost 2 full terms of education missed over their whole school career.

Friendships suffer – during 2 weeks' absence social groups change. Your child may not fit back into the same friendship group on his/her return.

Absence causes disruption to other students and staff. Teachers cannot be expected to provide extra work and spend extra time with a student who has been absent without authorisation.

The Law

Government advises that you should not take your child out of school for family holidays during term time. The regulations make it clear that parents have no right or entitlement to take their children out of school for family holidays.

As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

When the request for absence has not been agreed and a parent continues to take the student out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Parents who take their children out of school for a family holiday that has not been authorised by the school could be deemed to be failing their responsibility to ensure regular attendance at school. This is contrary to Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

Legal proceeding can be instigated against parents by way of:

- Prosecution in the Magistrates Court which could result on a fine up to £1000, or:
- The issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. This is £60 per parent for each child, if paid within 28 days, rising to £120 per parent for each child, if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay can result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

In some cases, where a child fails to return within 10 school days of their expected return date, they may be deleted from roll of the school. Parents must then re-apply for a school place which could be at a different school if the original place has been filled.

Important:

Minsthorpe Community College cannot and will not authorise leave of absence for family holidays unless the circumstances are exceptional.

What are 'exceptional' reasons?

Government Guidance suggests circumstances such as:

- For service personnel on leave;

- For other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time, if the absence will have minimal disruption to the student's education.
When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

Please note that other issues such as timings of the absence, student's attendance record, student's educational needs and ability to catch up will also be taken into account.

College Procedures

If after reading this leaflet, you are still proposing to take your child out of school for a holiday, and you consider your reasons to be exceptional, you should ask for a request form from the Year Office. You should include as much information as you can to enable us to consider your request. The form should be submitted at least 3 weeks in advance of the proposed absence wherever possible.

You will receive a letter giving our decision and explaining the reason for the decision. Please note requests for 'days out' will not be authorised.

School Holiday/Term Dates

Term dates can be found in the front of student planners or on the college website. Alternatively, you can telephone us on the number below. Term dates for future years are always set well in advance and these are available on request.

General Office:

Telephone: 01977 657600

Email: enquiries@minsthorpe.cc

If you wish to discuss any leave of absence request, or anything concerning your child's attendance please use the contacts below.

Mrs G Newton – Education Welfare Officer

Minsthorpe Community College Minsthorpe Lane
South Elmsall
Pontefract
WF9 2UJ

Phone: 01977 657600

Fax: 01977 657605

Email: enquires@minsthorpe.cc

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